

The Budget—Mr. Tremblay

Far from weakening their autonomy or sacrificing any of their constitutional rights, they have merely found a method of utilizing one of these rights . . .

And, farther on, he said:

With this assurance of stable and rising revenues, they are for the first time in a position to plan with courage and confidence and a sense of real independence, programmes for the efficient discharge of their constitutional responsibilities.

The government of Canada looks forward to the day when the agreement of all or substantially all the provinces will make possible the achievement of the great national purposes which impelled the dominion to make its comprehensive proposals of August, 1945.

And further:

Nevertheless, we do not ask any province to accept a tax agreement unless it believes such agreement to be in its own interest as well as that of the country as a whole. We did our best to shape the offer of last June in such a way as to make it possible and satisfactory for any province to remain out of the agreement if it wished to do so, and we would far prefer to have a province remain out indefinitely than to endeavour to persuade it to come in against its own judgment of where its true interests lie.

As I shall have to refer to this point later, I beg the house to notice particularly the date of the minister's statement, namely, April 29.

I now wish to quote the opinion of a newspaperman whose independence, good faith, talent or patriotism will not be questioned since I refer to Mr. Eugène l'Heureux, editor of *l'Opinion Libre* who, on February 7 last, expressed himself as follows with reference to the dominion proposals which were submitted to the provinces. I quote:

Each province has two alternatives: a grant of \$12.75 per person based on the province's population in 1942, plus one half the provincial revenue derived from personal and corporation income taxes in 1940, plus also, the statutory grants; or, a \$15 grant per capita based on the province's population in 1942, plus statutory grants. In either case, the amount thus calculated would represent the income guaranteed each province by the Dominion government.

The capitations in the amount of \$12.50 and \$15 would be multiplied each year by the total number of persons comprising the province's total population. Under the said proposals the amount of the capitations would increase in proportion to the national production. Therefore, the provinces are assured of an annual guaranteed minimum subsidy which, in the case of the province of Quebec, would amount to \$56,383,000 in 1947. According to statistical estimates, it may even reach \$63,011,000.

The 1942 Dominion-Provincial agreement provided for a revenue of \$22,000,000 to the province of Quebec.

The margin between \$22,000,000 on the one hand, and \$56,383,000 or \$63,011,000, on the other hand, is in, round figures \$34,000,000 or \$41,000,000.

[Mr. Tremblay.]

No such amounts have ever been placed at the disposal of the province. They would supplement most opportunely the aggregate income derived from various sources and could be used at the will of the legislature for improving education, public health and all the services required by modern standards.

Mr. L'Heureux concludes as follows:

Those who regard such proposals as encroaching upon provincial autonomy should ask themselves whether such a system would not, by coordinating tax collection methods and granting more funds to the province, provide it with the necessary incentive to modernize its whole organization.

Such is the opinion expressed by an absolutely independent writer, following the statement made by the Minister of Finance.

Now, what answer was made to those proposals not only by the premier of Quebec but by the leader of the neighbouring province? Let me give you an idea. Here, on page 14 of the excellent newspaper put out by our French-speaking compatriots of Ontario, *Le Droit* of May 7th, are purple headlines which I now place before you. Allow me to read them: "The Dominion proposals are unacceptable." This is the hon. Maurice Duplessis speaking. In the next column: "Drew charges the Dominion with blackmail" and finally, to dress up the page, here is a picture bearing this caption: "John Bracken, leader of the opposition, supports Premier George Drew of Ontario at the Young Conservatives' banquet held in Ottawa. From left to right: Mr. Drew, Mr. So-and-So and the leader of the opposition," forming a happy group.

Mr. PINARD: A real rhapsody in blue.

Mr. TREMBLAY: Both denounced in the strongest terms the offer made by the government to each of the provinces of Confederation. I shall quote a statement of one of the premiers and I wager that you will be unable to say whether it was made by Mr. Drew or by Mr. Duplessis. I quote without disclosing the name of the speaker; I ask you to guess:

Putting all his cards on the table, the premier denied that his province had ever thought of negotiating, as six other provinces did, a secret agreement with the central administration. No provincial official has approached, directly or indirectly, any "minor dominion government official" in order to conclude an agreement by underhand methods.

After stating that Canada has reached a turning point in her history, he reminded everyone of his duty to fight to the end in order to prevent the "possible" setting up of a dictatorship which would spell the doom not only of provincial rights but of individual freedom.